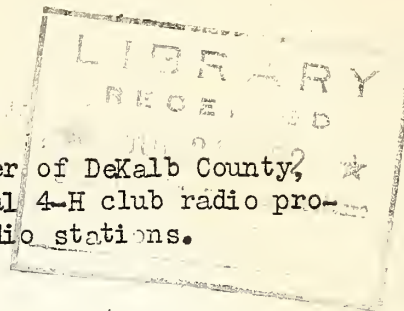


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HOW WE REDUCED CLOTHING EXPENSES



A radio talk by Edna Schweitzer, 4-H club member of DeKalb County, Ill., delivered Saturday, July 2, 1932, in the National 4-H club radio program, broadcast over a network of 59 associate NBC radio stations.

Everyone wants to be attractive. Some want it very mildly. To others it is all-important. The plain girl, the beautiful girl, the poor girl, the rich girl, - all girls - strive to be attractive. For some of us it is easy; for some it is much more difficult. No matter which class of girls you belong to, money enters into your problem of being attractive. Girls' 4-H club work helps a girl to be well dressed and still not spend too much on her clothing.

The most obvious way in which girls' 4-H club helps reduce expenses is by teaching members how to sew so that they can make their own clothing. It is true that a girl can now buy a dress very cheaply, but considering the quality of the material in that dress and the material which one could buy for the same money, wouldn't she save by being able to make her own clothes?

The things not so obvious are often the things most worthwhile. 4-H club work is not entirely practice in sewing even though this is the part which you can see most easily. Before I started club work, one piece of material seemed to me as good as another if they looked alike. I soon learned from 4-H club work that there is a difference between weighted silks and unweighted silks, pure wools and wools mixed with other fibres. I also learned that the cheapest is often the most costly. Through 4-H club work, I have learned that durability, practicability, and attractiveness of a garment also enter into the cost of that garment. To me, the most costly dress is the dress poorly made out of poor material, of unattractive color and pattern. I have learned that such a dress soon wears thin and then it hangs in the closet because I do not like it well enough to fix it. So one of the not very obvious ways in which 4-H clubs teach us to reduce our clothing expenses is by teaching us to choose materials wisely.

Have you an attic in your home where the family puts clothes when they are outgrown or supposedly worn out? We have that kind of an attic but since my sister and I have been in 4-H club work you find few "old clothes" in the attic. I think one of the most exciting things in sewing is to see what an attractive outfit I can make from one of my own, my mother's or my sister's old dresses. I have found it an easy job to make smart clothes from cast-offs in the last few years.

Last year, I went to the club tour at Urbana. You Illinois girls who have been there know what an event the banquet is and how each girl tries to be well dressed for it. I didn't have a single dress which would do at all so I began to figure. I had an old pink organdy informal party dress which I had worn to proms when I was a junior in high school. The styles had changed since then and my dress was entirely too short. But it did have a nice full skirt, so I took the dress apart, figured, twisted, and turned until I finally found a way, by using narrow tucks to cover the needed pickings around the skirt, to have a new dress. One of my most worn winter outfits, a navy blue suit, is a made over from an old one of mother's. In
(over)

fact with the little summery blouses which are being worn so much, I wore this skirt up till the last day of school. Besides teaching skill in sewing so that members can make over garments, 4-H club leaders suggest making over a garment as a year's project, and give suggestions how to make attractive dresses from outgrown and partially worn out garments.

How we all despise the hose which develops a hole in the heel or toe or the dress which begins to wear thin on the elbows! Does a hole in your hose mean that their use is nearly over? The 4-H girl learns that the sooner and better she darns a hole, the longer she can put off buying a new pair of hose. To a 4-H club girl, a dress is not worthless because an elbow has come "popping out." She can apply a patch so well that it will hardly show or remodel the sleeve in such a way that the dress is still good for more wear.

The 4-H club girl works mostly with the dress and one undergarment to go with it, but she also studies and chooses the other accessories, so that her hats, coats, shoes, hose and other things will be chosen just as wisely and economically as she does her dress.

If 4-H's only accomplishment were to help reduce clothing expenses, I believe it would be worthwhile, but since it also teaches the way to better living through the better use of the 4-H's, I should say, "May many more boys and girls, young men and young women, learn what 4-H club can and will do for them."